

# LEE COUNTY

## Honorable Richard Lane

Lee County Courthouse  
2311 Gateway Dr.  
Opelika, AL 36801  
(334) 749-7141

Jerry Bradford  
Kathryn Molnar  
William Matthews  
Peggy Bridges  
Ruth Hairston  
Belinda Paul  
Kim Bentley  
Kim McManus  
Angie Dollar  
Dena Barnes  
Clifford E. Jones  
Grady Jones  
Felicia Williams  
Wanda Lewis

Wendy Dean  
Lola White  
Chris Nunn  
Ginger Brannon  
Betty Wingo  
Margaret Keiley  
Emily Kayn  
James Higgins  
Roberta Jackel  
Wendi Huguley  
Bill English  
Tasha Heard  
Virginia Thompson  
Melvin Harrison

Lori Klinger  
Carolyn Tucker Simmons  
Erin Predmore  
Keva Scott  
Julius Shanks  
Thomas Sherfield  
Dawn Smith  
Lisa Stephens  
Liz Todd  
Melissa Weldon  
Betty Benton  
Elizabeth Griffin  
Wanda Lewis  
J. Read Haughery



Vista Volunteer: Susan Cochran

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Family Resource Center
2. Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition between Lee and Tallapoosa County
3. Quality early care and education throughout the community with an emphasis on literacy.

# Issues

*Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.*

## **Health - Children's (0 - 19)**

physical and mental well-being in the county.

### **Substance Abuse**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Identify possible resources
- Link Health Department & ACCADA
- Change legislation making purchase of tobacco products NOT "similar to uniform non-traffic offense."

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Work with DHR to provide training to required reporters
- Send reminders to individual agencies

## **Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.**

**Teens need a safe place to gather which offers activities that meet the needs and interests of teenagers**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Assess what is available in area for teenagers
- Assess community as to needs and compare to availability to identify gaps
- Assess community, and begin community dialog

**Public Transportation is needed for youth, teens and working parents (to reduce family stress, and increase family self-esteem)**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Assess what is available in the community
- Assess community as to needs and compare to availability to identify gaps
- Assess costs and funding available

**There is a need for an easy-to-use centralized source of information pertinent to children in the Lee County area, such as a resource website as well as a printed resource that could be placed in centralized locations for distribution**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Identify and assess the existing resources available to access information about children
- Identify a means, such as a website or printed resource that can be easily accessed by anyone in need of resource information about children
- Identify funding source for the website and printed resource
- Identify an individual to build the website and prepare a printed resource
- Identify those resources and agencies that provide services to meet the above described needs of children in Lee County
- Resources listed on the website/and or directory will be reviewed and updated in June of each year.

## **Education - Children**

learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

**Address the County's high levels of illiteracy, truancy, and drop-outs with an emphasis on character building traits such as responsibility, self-discipline, and improving good study and work habits**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Develop a collaborative way to promote available literacy activities and to prevent further drop-out
- Establish a Task Force to coordinate an integrated character building program that widely promotes character building activities such as through church youth directors, public service announcements and youth organizations besides schools
- To assess resources/barriers and advantages, a committee or paid evaluator should examine these points and report to the Children's Policy Council with data and suggestions for the next step

**Improve access to education for English Language Learners and expand school to career to program opportunities**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Assess what is being offered to students in public schools
- Assess what is being offered to families in the community
- Find resources to fill gaps and ways to make the resources more accessible.

## **Early Care and**

### **Education - Children**

(0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

**Quality early care and education throughout the community with an emphasis on literacy**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Identify resources for the 0 to 5 age group that will promote quality early learning experiences
- Compile and disseminate resource information to providers and families
- Coordinate efforts to address unmet needs through a functioning Kidstuff Committee

**Accessibility of quality child care and early learning options**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Promote family community awareness and the importance of quality child care and literacy
- Support quality enhancement efforts that result in a more stable, better trained and effective child care workforce
- Identify barriers to family accessibility of early learning opportunities

## **Economic Security**

**- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.**

**Lee County needs a Family Resource Center to not only supply a link connecting the many services found in Lee County, but more importantly, to connect those services with Lee County's children and families in need of those services**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Secure a grant to support FRC Director, who would also serve as Lee County CPC Director, along with officer personnel and equipment, and who could provide a daily source of assistance and a clearinghouse of information, which would see that agencies providing services were readily available to the public
- Write grants and assist local agencies in identifying and applying for grants, as well as coordinate fund-raising activities and other revenue producing methods aimed at supporting the Lee County FRC, so it could provide a variety of services including maintaining a Lee County website database of services and, in addition, produce, publish and distribute a resource Directory of Services for children and families in Lee County
- Act as the local authority on services for children and families in Lee County and, as such, develop an evaluation of Lee County agencies, or a "report card" of agencies and the services they provide to show accountability to the citizens and taxpayers of Lee County

## Financially Stable Home

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Assess the level of knowledge of students in schools in Lee County in the area of money management
- Provide a report on our findings from said assessment to all school systems in Lee County and to the Children's Policy Council
- Provide information on educational opportunities available outside the school setting and encourage introduction, or the enhancement of fiscal responsibility training in the schools

## Parent Involvement and Skills - Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

### Create a Family Services & Resource Center for the purpose of coordinating parent services

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Survey agencies in the region to determine services being provided to parents
- Continue focus group including community partners in the faith based community who are providing services to parents in Lee County to discuss how services provided can be coordinated and delivered in a seamless manner without duplication
- Visit existing family resource centers for the purpose of planning a program for Lee County

## Increase parent awareness of the parental partnership with child care providers and school personnel, healthcare personnel, local government, etc.

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Clearly define the partnership by creating and producing resource brochures for parents of children ages 0 to 5
- Produce and distribute quarterly newsletter and resource brochures for parents of children 0 to 19 outlining the role of parents, teachers, and other partners in the partnership required to maximize each child's learning and growth experience
- Disseminate these materials by giving them to organizations and businesses frequented by parents, schools, child care providers, churches, health care facilities, etc..

## Policy Recommendation

1. Department of Education needs to do a better job of defining truancy, especially as it relates to unexcused absences and tardiness.
2. Department of Education and AOC need to make concerted effort to work together to make parents more accountable for their children not only in terms of school attendance, but also in controlling behavior of their children.
3. More oversight is needed within DHR for how reports of suspected child abuse/neglect are handled, every accepted/listed as report. County level staff is often very difficult for mandated reporters to deal with.
4. State legislature needs to give the state law a specific punishment for underage alcohol sales, or change the way it is addressed.
5. State legislature needs to try to get legislature to put more funding into the Child Management Agencies.
6. State Department of Education-Economic Life Skills Course taught in schools.
7. Provide more funding for child care slots.
8. Increase funding support for after school programs for children and teens.
9. Fund Family Resource Centers
10. More child care subsidy dollars

## Accomplishments

1. VISTA Volunteer worked with the Child Resource Center to get a grant for \$1,000.00 from CAKF for a Health Fair for Lee County. They were awarded this grant
2. The VISTA Volunteer and CPC worked to establish 501 (c) (3) non-profit and located funds to pay the filing fee for this status.
3. The VISTA Volunteer worked with the CPC to write the Unified Prevention Grant for Lee and Tallapoosa Counties.
4. The Economic Security Committee worked with Red Cross to compile a questionnaire that has gone out to the Lee County community. Once the data has been compiled the committee hopes to use the information to offer life skills classes to the community.
5. Our Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition has put together resource materials from area agencies

that focus on prevention to offer to parents at the local middle school open houses.

### **Additional Lee County Children's Policy Council Members:**

Tammy Morgan	George Bandy
Jennifer Herring	Mike Hubbard
Emilyn Gipson	Myon Penn
Sonja Davis	Betty Graham
Gail Piggott	Jay Jones
Gina Ivey	Mark Neighbors
Jameka Nunn	John C. Painter
Phillip Raley	
Perry Hinds	
Susan Cochran	
Kim Edmondson	
Caro Womer	
Jan Burke	
Lu Tosch	
Frances McDumont	
Ann Penney	
Marcy Gilder	
G. Thorpe	
D.W. Day	
Mandy Jennings	
Fred Gray	
Martha Myers	
Nick Abbett	
Jean Spicer	
Laura Cooper	
T.D. Little	